

How the Mountain Gods Came to The People

by Claire R. Farrer

A very long time ago, a great sickness came on The People. The rains did not come to water the thirsty land. The People became hungry and ill. The wise people in the camp said they would have to move south, to where there was good water, plants, and animals, or they would starve.

The People packed up the camp. The very old and the babies were placed on horses; everyone else would walk. Everyone was ready to go except for two boys. One was blind, and the other was crippled. The two boys said that they would stay behind, for they knew that they would keep the others from moving quickly. When the two boys refused to change their minds, the others left them with heavy hearts.

Even though the boys were careful, the food and water that was left with them did not last long. One night, as they prepared to go to sleep, hungry and thirsty, dark clouds covered the moon and the stars in the sky. Suddenly, four huge men appeared in front of them. Their faces and bodies were covered with black except for a four-pointed star that glowed white. They wore headdresses and long kilts that reached almost to their ankles, and jingles sounded on their wrists and ankles as they moved. Their moccasins were finely made and decorated. A smaller figure, a clownish boy no bigger than the two boys, was walking behind the huge figures. The boy also was painted, although he did not wear a headdress and his kilt was short. Laughing, he gestured for the boys to follow him and the men. The four men and the boy walked up to the face of a mountain and disappeared inside. The head and shoulders of the boy reappeared, and again he gestured to the boys to follow. Both boys closed their eyes, swallowed hard, and walked right through the solid rock as if it were water.

They followed the men and the boy until they found themselves in a cave deep inside the mountain. The two boys were offered water and food. They were given new clothes to replace their tattered ones. Each received a new pair of moccasins with jingles on them.

The men began to dance around a large fire in the middle of the caveroom. "We are the Mountain Gods," they said. "You were unselfish when you sacrificed yourselves so that your people could live. Watch us dance. Listen to the music. These are holy songs. They will help your people. Learn them."

Reading Mini-Assessment Grade 5
LA.A.1.2.3 Vocabulary Form B

Soon the two boys were singing and dancing with the Mountain gods. They suddenly realized that the blind boy could see and the crippled boy was dancing without any pain or twisted limbs. Tired from dancing, they were shown places to sleep by the fire.

When they awakened, the fire had died and the cave was silent, but fresh food and water had been left for them. They put on their new clothes and moccasins.

In only four steps, the boys were back at their old camp. They began to follow the trail left by The People. In four days, they caught up with them. But the sentry did not recognize the boys, and a camp meeting was called so that The People could decide what to do with them.

As the once-blinded boy began to talk, an elderly couple began to cry because his voice was exactly the same as that of the child they had left behind years ago. When the once-crippled boy began to speak, his voice was drowned out by the wailing of a very old woman who was convinced that she was hearing the voice of her son, whom she had not seen for years.

The boys were astonished. To their families and friends, years had passed since they had been left behind during the starving time! A young girl brought them a dipper of water. They saw the faces of grown men, not those of young boys, reflected in the water.

They related their story. They sang the songs they had been taught and demonstrated the dances of the Mountain Gods. They told The People that when they danced with pure hearts, the Mountain Gods would visit them in spirit and, through their dancing and singing, would cure all who needed help.

The boys told The People how to make the masks and headdresses, how to bless those who were to dance, and how to dance without tiring. The People followed the instructions. All were blessed, and those who were sick found comfort and were healed.

So the Apaches danced, and they still do.

Reading Mini-Assessment Grade 5
LA.A.1.2.3 Vocabulary Form B

Name _____ **Date** _____

Directions: Read the passage “How the Mountain Gods Came to the People”, then circle the letter of the correct answer.

1. Read this sentence from the story.

The four men and the boy walked up to the face of a mountain and disappeared inside.

Which word has the SAME root as “disappeared”?

- A. pear
 - B. appear
 - C. appeal
 - D. disapprove
2. Which two words from the story have almost the SAME meaning?
- A. related, told
 - B. offered, followed
 - C. realized, convinced
 - D. placed, packed
3. When the author writes that “The boys were astonished,” he means that the boys were
- A. blessed.
 - B. starved.
 - C. amazed.
 - D. healed.

4. Read this sentence from the story.

Laughing, he gestured for the boys to follow him and the men.

This sentence means that he

- A. asked the boys to follow them.
- B. signaled for the boys to follow them.
- C. requested that the boys follow them.
- D. demanded that the boys follow them.

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LA.A.1.2.3 Vocabulary Form B

5. Read this sentence from the story.

As the once-blind boy began to talk, an elderly couple began to cry because his voice was exactly the same as that of the child they had left behind years ago.

Which word means the OPPOSITE of *elderly*?

- A. grown
- B. adult
- C. old
- D. young

Reading Mini-Assessment Grade 5
LA.A.1.2.3 Vocabulary Form B

Answer Key – How the Mountain Gods Came to the People

LA.A.1.2.3: Using context clues, prefixes, suffixes, root words, word relationships (including multiple meanings, antonyms, synonyms, homonyms, homophones, and word origins), the student identifies the meaning of a word or phrase in a passage and/or graphic. Analysis and/or inference may be required to comprehend the meaning of the word or phrase.

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